

Results of Inspections – Juvenile Halls and Camps

This was the BOC's first complete inspection cycle for juvenile halls and camps. Many of these facilities had not been inspected for years, and the minimum standards for juvenile facilities had been updated and revised in 1995/96. Thus, it is not surprising that there were a number of non-compliance issues related to policies and procedures. However, given the level of professionalism and dedication demonstrated by most of the staff in these facilities, the BOC anticipates a much higher rate of compliance in the next inspection cycle.

Specific results of the 1996/97 inspection cycle are found in Appendix E, which lists areas of compliance and non-compliance by juvenile facility and standard. Like jails, juvenile facilities quite often are in non-compliance with only part of the standard, not the entire regulation.

Most Common Areas of Deficiencies

The majority of local juvenile facilities operate in general compliance with minimum state standards. As with jails, the most common deficiency for juvenile halls and camps in the 1996/97 inspection cycle stemmed from crowding levels. Over 29 percent of the juvenile halls and over 35 percent of the camps had insufficient space in one or more of the following areas: sleeping rooms, dormitories, dayrooms, and/or classrooms. The most frequently noted deficiencies in juvenile facility operations statewide related to:

- Juvenile Hall Space Requirements (physical plant deficiencies);
- Camp Space Requirements (physical plant is deficient in one or more areas);
- Policy and Procedures Manual (missing sections or not updated annually);
- Death of a Minor While Detained (inadequate policies and procedures);
- Failure to have current medical/mental health inspection reports on file;
- Orientation (inadequate policies and procedures);
- Use of Force (inadequate policies and procedures);
- Discipline Process (inadequate policies and procedures);
- Staffing (inadequate staffing levels);
- Child Supervision Staff Training (inadequate training); and
- Assessment and Plan (failure to provide minors within 30 days after commitment).

Juvenile Halls

A juvenile hall is a county facility designed for the reception and temporary care of detained minors. Generally speaking, minors are held in juvenile halls an average of 30 days, depending on the facility resources related to housing minors.

As previously noted, the most common deficiency for juvenile halls in 1996/97 was insufficient space (over 29 percent were out of compliance with physical plant standards). Another frequent deficiency was the failure to provide an assessment and plan for each minor within 30 days after commitment. Fifteen percent of the juvenile halls were out of compliance with this regulation,

which requires an assessment of the minor's problems (e.g., substance abuse history) and needs (e.g., education, vocational training, counseling, family reunification), and a plan describing how the issues identified in the assessment will be addressed.

In addition, 12 percent of the juvenile halls had incomplete or outdated policies and procedures. Specific areas that were deficient in policies and procedures include: the death of a minor in custody; orientation; use of force; and the disciplinary process.

Camps

A juvenile camp (or ranch, forestry camp or boot camp) is a county facility designed for minors who are declared wards of the court (pursuant to Section 602, Welfare and Institutions Code) and determined to require commitment in a local facility. Generally, the length of stay in a camp is six months to one year.

The impact of crowding on camps is evident in the fact that over one-third of these facilities (35 percent) failed to meet physical space requirements during FY 1996/97. The next most common deficiency was the failure to have current medical and/or mental health inspection reports on file. About 15 percent of the camps were out of compliance with this regulation. In addition, a relatively small number of camps (8 percent) had inadequate policies and procedures for the death of a minor in custody, orientation, use of force, and the disciplinary process.